

Fact Sheet

Well Licensing

April 2011

Licensing for Constructing Wells

The Ontario Water Resources Act and the Wells regulation (O. Reg. 903) set the rules and licensing requirements for constructing wells. Licensing requirements for well construction include minimum experience and knowledge with well construction. Different requirements may apply depending on the type of work being done. The construction rules and licensing requirements are part of the multi-barrier approach to protect groundwater and drinking water.

Well Contractor Licence

A person, business or other organization must have a well contractor licence to engage in the well construction business. To obtain a well contractor licence from the Ministry of the Environment, an applicant's character, insurance and financial responsibility must meet the requirements in the act and the regulation. A well contractor must also have employees who are qualified according to the regulation.

Well Technician Licence

A licensed well contractor must also hold a well technician licence or employ a licensed well technician to work on a well. There are five classes of well technician licence. Each class allows a person to do different construction activities on a well such as drilling, excavating and installing a pump or monitoring equipment.

Licence Exemptions

There are some exemptions to licensing for activities that are generally considered a lower environmental risk. For example, a person can inspect a well without a licence as long as the person does not leave equipment unattended in the well. See the Wells regulation for more information about exempted activities.

Residential well owners may construct, repair or upgrade their own wells without a licence. However, there are many serious dangers associated with constructing a well such as working in confined spaces and electrical hazards. Since most well owners are not familiar with these potential hazards and the requirements in the regulation, they should hire a licensed well technician, who works for a licensed well contractor, to do the work.

The land owner must retain a licensed well contractor that employs licensed well technicians of the correct class to make changes or repair the well if:

- any form of payment takes place
- the owner is a business corporation, partnership, sole proprietor or a government agency.

Abandoning a Well

When abandoning a well (plugging and sealing), the “person abandoning the well” (often the well owner) must:

- hire a licensed well contractor
- ensure a contract is in place which specifies that a well technician, licensed to construct the type of well that is being abandoned, must do the work.

The Wells regulation provides an exemption for residential well owners to abandon their well without having to hire a licensed well contractor. Given the potential hazards associated with this task, it is suggested that a residential well owner consider hiring a licensed well technician who holds the correct class of licence to perform the work and who holds a well contractor licence or works for a licensed well contractor.

See the technical bulletin called Wells Regulation – Well Construction Licensing for more information about licensing.

Learn more

- [Technical Bulletin: Wells Regulation – Well Construction Licensing](#)
- [Water Supply Wells – Requirements and Best Management Practices](#)
- [Wells regulation](#)
- [Ontario Water Resources Act](#)

Contact us

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Notice: This fact sheet is being provided for information purposes only and is not intended, nor should it be construed as providing legal advice in any circumstances. The applicable legislation including the Ontario Water Resources Act and Regulation 903, as amended and made under that Act, should be consulted. Legislation and regulations change from time to time so it is essential that the most current versions be used.

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